



March 15, 2024
401 E. Pratt Street, 17th Floor Conference Room
Baltimore
1:00pm – 2:30pm
Minutes

Members in Attendance:

Meryam Bouadjemi, Chair	Office of the Governor
Ruchi Bhowmik	Netflix – Virtual
Andy Forssell	HBO Max, Hulu – Virtual
Renard Jenkins	Warner Bros. Discovery – Virtual
David O’Ferrall	IASTE Local 487
Sumi Parekh	Group Effort Initiative – Virtual
Judee Ann Williams	Creative Arts Agency – Virtual

Guests:

Jennifer LaHatte	Department of Commerce – Virtual
Julie Woepke	Department of Commerce
Jerel Registre	Department of Commerce
Walter Donoughe	Department of Commerce
Liz Fitzsimmons	Department of Commerce
Jack Gerbes	Department of Commerce
Catherine Batavick	Department of Commerce
Portia Wu	Secretary of Labor
Ashley Sharp	Department of Labor
Tess Hetzel	Department of Service & Civic Innovation
Jonny Dorsey	Office of the Governor
Camille Blake Fall	Parkway Theatre
KJ Mohr	Maryland Film Festival
Brett Egan	Parkway Theatre

I. Meeting called to Order

Chair Meryam Bouadjemi called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM and welcomed all members and attendees.

II. Minutes of the February 9, 2024 Meeting

Upon a motion made and duly seconded, the minutes of the February 9, 2024 meeting were approved.

III. Chair’s Report

Chair Bouadjemi reported that she has been working with Commerce staff to make progress on the Council’s short-term initiatives discussed during the February 9, 2024 meeting. Over the last month,

Chair Bouadjemi and staff have started to reach out to businesses, organizations, and agencies that could be potential sponsors for the State’s new service year program; surveyed options for researchers and started drafting a statement of work for the Council’s industry study; and partnered with the Maryland Film Festival to host a Governor’s VIP reception before the opening night of the festival’s 25th-anniversary celebration. She then invited Council members to participate in a panel interview with Governor Moore after the opening with more details to come related to programming and logistics.

IV. Maryland Film Festival

Ms. Camille Blake-Fall, Vice-Chair of the Parkway Theatre and Maryland Film Festival began the presentation with a brief overview of the Theatre’s history. She discussed that the Parkway’s mission is to raise awareness for emerging films and filmmakers in Baltimore and that several filmmakers who have been featured by the Parkway have since enjoyed successful careers as nationally renowned directors.

Ms. Blake-Fall introduced Mr. Brett Egan, Acting Director of the Parkway Theatre, to discuss the Parkway’s evolution, current outlook, and future needs. As a nonprofit site, the Parkway is an important test case for the future of non-profit exhibition centers. Mr. Egan said that Parkway is working to rethink the value of films in the face of modern entertainment markets, and how film culture can be integrated with new media such as streaming, gaming, and augmented reality. He noted that there is still demand for a ‘safe space’ for independent filmmakers to network and receive training/funding. Parkway leadership has recently been working to meet these demands—especially following the COVID-19 pandemic—by expanding to host events to promote forms of entertainment beyond film media alone. Presentation on file.

Mr. Egan then introduced KJ Mohr, Programming Director for the Maryland Film Festival, to provide an overview of what council members could expect during the Film Festival in May. She told members that an official program would be available on April 7th.

V. Service Year & Apprenticeship Programs – Opportunities for MEIC Engagement

Mr. Jonny Dorsey, Deputy Chief of Staff to Governor Wes Moore, began with a discussion about the Maryland Council on Innovation and Impact. The Council was created by Governor Moore to connect philanthropy, government, and nonprofit organizations to make Maryland the leading site for change initiatives in the country. Mr. Dorsey explained some significant achievements of the Council, including a partnership between the Maryland Department of Health and Upstream USA to increase access to contraceptive care and increasing funding for life coaches from the Thrive Academy to help high-risk young people in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

Mr. Dorsey transitioned the presentation to Ms. Tess Hetzel, Chief of Staff to Service and Civic Innovation Secretary Paul Monteiro, who presented information on the new service year program. Ms. Hetzel stated that Maryland has created a service year program unlike any other in the country in that the state is partnering with for-profit organizations as well as state agencies, unions, and nonprofits. She noted that participants would commit 30 hours each week during the program to work and learn at their respective organizations, and 10 hours each week would be designated for professional development programming. She said that tailoring the program to include entertainment and the arts is an exciting opportunity and planned to continue conversations with MEIC members to develop this strategy moving forward.

Ms. Hetzel then introduced Labor Secretary Portia Wu, who gave an overview of the State’s Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) grant program and registered apprenticeship reimbursement and tax credit programs. Secretary Wu expressed her excitement about expanding these programs to the media

and entertainment industry, especially if existing talent related to advanced tech and gaming could be engaged as well.

VI. Discussion and Next Steps

No further items were discussed.

VII. Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:25 PM.